

## Day 28: Tanning by PaperBodies

**Series:** [Harringrove April Challenge \[18\]](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** First Kiss, Future Fic, Getting Together, M/M

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Robin Buckley (mentioned), Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2021-04-29

**Updated:** 2021-04-29

**Packaged:** 2022-04-01 01:10:44

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,392

**Publisher:** [archiveofourown.org](https://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary:**

Six years after he left Hawkins in his rearview mirror, Billy Hargrove tripped over Steve Harrington on a beach in Cancun. In Billy's defense, it was two in the morning, and the secluded beach he was on was difficult enough to find that it was usually only frequented by employees of the resort. Billy knew for a fact that most of his coworkers were already at their monthly poker night, so he should have had the beach to himself.

Instead, Steve Harrington was blinking up at him, eyes big and dark and honestly warmer than Billy had any right to expect. Billy stared down at him.

## Day 28: Tanning

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"What the fuck are you doing here?" Billy asked while he was still trying to figure out if this was actually happening, or was a particularly vivid dream. Steve snorted.

"Tanning, obviously," Steve replied. "Now fuck off," he added, but there was no edge to his tone at all. Besides, Billy had never in his life fucked off just because Steve Harrington had asked him to, and he wasn't about to start now. He sat down next to where Steve was lying on a beach towel on the sand in the dark. Steve snorted, like he'd been expecting that all along.

"Seriously, what are you doing here? And why don't you look surprised to see me?" Billy asked, because Steve was taking this suspiciously well. He hadn't looked like a deer in the headlights even once, which was kind of a shame, actually. Steve was cute when he was confused. Steve sighed.

"Robin speaks six languages and can get by in a few more. She was best friends with half of the staff less than a day after we arrived. As far as I know, she's terrorizing the employee poker game as we speak." Steve smirked at him. "And apparently the hot new scuba instructor is all anyone wants to talk about." Billy rolled his eyes.

"Great," he muttered. "So you and Buckley are here on vacation?" Steve winced a little.

“Not exactly,” he said, and Billy had only been back from his own vacation for a day and a half, but he had heard the story. Several times. His eyes widened.

“Oh no,” he breathed. “You’re the guy whose fiancée left him a month before the wedding.” Steve raised a water bottle that was clearly not full of water and took a long swig.

“I am indeed,” he said, making a face at the burn of alcohol.

“That fucking sucks,” Billy said, although he could admit to himself that he was not personally all that disappointed by it. He hesitated, but he was too curious not to ask. “Did she actually—“

“Yes, she actually called me from her bachelorette party to tell me she was leaving me for the stripper. In fact,” Steve said, looking at his watch for some reason, “Diana and her exotic dancer have probably been married for about four days now.” Billy did the math and his eyes widened.

“You let your fiancée use the wedding the two of you planned...to marry someone else?”

“Yes,” Steve said, “but I drew the line at letting them go on the honeymoon. I planned it, so I get to enjoy it.”

“With Robin.”

“Yep,” Steve said with a grin. Then he held up one half of a little gold heart, from where it was hanging on a chain around his neck. “We’re best bitches,” he said.

“I’m sure you are,” Billy said with a laugh. Then he shook his head. “You’re still way too fucking nice. It’s good to know that some things haven’t changed since high school.” Steve shrugged.

“It was mostly just practical,” he said, flopping back and staring up at the sky. “It was definitely too late to get our deposits back, so when she asked if she could still use the venue and the caterer, it felt dumb to say no.”

“Yeah,” Billy said, nodding sarcastically, “why inconvenience

someone who completely fucked you over?” Steve just hummed in response, and Billy watched him watch the sky for a long moment. Eventually, Billy flopped down on his back next to Steve and stared up at the stars. Steve held out the water bottle, and Billy took a long swig. He was a little surprised to taste dark rum.

“How long have you been in Cancun?” Steve asked. Billy shrugged.

“A few months.”

“Where were you before that?”

“Grand Cayman,” Billy said, and Steve looked over, eyebrows high. “I go where there are scuba instructor jobs,” he explained. And then he left again, right around the time whoever he was fucking started dropping hints about taking their relationship to the next level. But Steve didn’t need to know that part. Next to him, Steve sighed.

“That sounds so cool,” he said a little wistfully. And it was. Although it had been a little cooler a couple of years ago, before freedom started to feel just the tiniest bit like loneliness.

“What about you?” Billy asked. “What have you been up to? Aside from...you know.”

“Getting dumped?” Steve asked. “Well, I also lost my job.”

“Holy shit,” Billy breathed, and Steve actually grinned over at him.

“Two weeks ago, I showed up to our annual fundraising gala with a dude I picked up at a bar the night before, and we may have done some light pre-partying. My father was not amused, and he told me not to bother coming in anymore.” Billy stared, but Steve’s amusement seemed real.

“Well, you’re not sobbing into a cocktail that comes in half a coconut on one of the shitty tourist beaches, so you seem to be handling it fairly well,” he said. Steve huffed a laugh.

“Yeah,” he said. “It’s stupid, because my whole damn life imploded in the last month, and I definitely should have been devastated, but you know what I felt instead?” Billy shook his head. “*Relief*,” Steve said.

"I was relieved when Diana broke it off, and I was maybe even more relieved when my dad told me not to come back to work anymore." He looked back up at the sky. "Now I just have to figure out what comes next."

It was stupid—Billy knew it was. He hadn't seen Steve Harrington in six years, and it wasn't like they had even really had a chance to become friends before Billy bailed on Hawkins the second the doctors told him he could. But one of Billy's biggest regrets, one of the missed opportunities he had thought he was going to look back on with disappointment until the day he died, was lying next to him on a beach in Mexico, and he just wasn't the kind of person who missed an opportunity twice.

"You could stay here," he blurted out before he thought too hard about it. Steve choked on a big sip of rum.

"What?" he asked, once he was sitting up and had the coughing back under control. Billy shrugged.

"You could stay here," he said again.

"Just stay in Mexico," Steve said skeptically. "And do what?" Billy couldn't resist. He shot Steve a suggestive smile.

"The hot new scuba instructor, obviously," he said. He sat up and leaned in slowly enough to give Steve plenty of time to pull back, or put a hand up to stop him. Steve didn't do either of those things, and he was just as good a kisser as Billy had always assumed he'd be, based on the stories about him.

"Well," said Steve when they broke the kiss to breathe, "it's good to know that some things *have* changed since high school."

"Less than you'd think," Billy murmured. "Does that mean you'll stay?"

"Maybe," Steve said with a grin. "I feel like I should save that decision for when I've had a little less rum. Besides, I'm here for another two and a half weeks. I've got time to think it over." Billy grinned and leaned back in for a second kiss. He had never expected

to get another shot at Steve Harrington, but now that he had it, he sure as hell wasn't going to waste it. And with two and a half weeks to work with? Well. He was going to make damn sure that Steve's best bitch got on that return flight all by herself.

**Author's Note:**

Tanning is mentioned, ok?

I'm on [Tumblr](#), if you want to come say hey!